

REMARKS

Claims 21, 23, 25, 29-33 have been amended. Claim 27 has been canceled to further the prosecution of the application. New claims 35-44 have been added. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the original and other claims in this and in other applications.

Claims 21, 23, 25, 27 and 29-33 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sanbongi (U.S. Patent no. 6,217,446) in view of Kawai (U.S. Patent no. 6,283,861). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 21 recites the act of setting “a first zone in front of the player character, a second zone set outside of the first zone, and an outer zone set outside of the second zone.” According to claim 21, “at least some of the target characters are configured to *move in and out between the first and second zones and between the second zone and the outer zone while the game player tries to attack the target characters*” and “the first zone is defined such that any target character within the first zone is *attackable from the player character*, the second zone is defined such that any target character within the second zone is conditionally *attackable from the player character*, and the outer zone is defined such that any target character outside the second zone is not attackable by the player” (emphasis added). Applicants respectfully submit that the cited combination fails to teach or suggest these limitations.

Sanbongi discloses three zones related to the position of an enemy: the “Attacking zone,” “Waiting zone” and “Appearing zone.” These zones indicate whether or not the enemy can attack a player character from these zones. For example, the enemy can attack the player character from the “Attacking zone.”

To the contrary, in claim 21, the first zone, second zone and the outer zone as a position of an enemy indicate whether or not the enemy can be attacked by the player character. That is, the claimed zones indicate whether the player character can attack the enemy, whereas the Sanbongi zones indicate whether the enemy can attack the player character. These are not the same zones.

Regarding the prior version of claim 21, the Examiner asserts that Sanbongi discloses in Figs. 6 and 7 that a player decides an order of selection to be attacked among the enemies. Applicants traverse this argument as it is simply incorrect. That is, Sanbongi's Figs. 6 and 7 illustrate whether or not the enemy in one zone can attack the player character. For example, the enemy in the "Attacking zone" can attack the player character, but the enemy in the "Waiting zone" cannot. The Sanbongi zones are simply not the same as the claim 21 invention's zones. This is one reason why claim 21 is allowable.

Moreover, Sanbongi's "Attacking zone," "Waiting zone" and "Appearing zone" cannot be the first zone, second zone and outer zone in claim 21 for at least one more reason. In Sanbongi, the enemy is supposed to move from the "Appearing zone" to the "Waiting zone" and then from the "Waiting zone" to the "Attacking zone." This is a one-way movement between the zones. To the contrary, in claim 21, the enemy is allowed to move from the outer zone to the second zone, from the second zone to the first zone, and also from the first zone to the second zone, from the second zone to the outer zone; this is not one-way movement between the zones and is another difference between claim 21 and Sanbongi. In addition, claim 21 recites "that any target character is currently in the second zone and it is one of selectable candidate objects to be attackable at said present time if it has a current value of the parameter between the first predetermined value and a second predetermined value set larger than said first predetermined value but excluding any target character which has then moved in from the outer zone within a certain period of time." Sanbongi simply does not teach or suggest these limitations.

Furthermore, claim 21 recites that the program causes the computer to: "(e) decide a recommended order of selection to be attacked among those of said plurality of selectable candidate objects in said first and second zones, in accordance with the current values of parameters at said present time so that the selectable candidate object having the smaller value of parameter is given with the higher priority in deciding the order; (f) indicate such recommended order of selection to the respective candidate objects in said first and second zones displayed on a monitor display connected to the computer; and (g) allow the player to change, by selecting one after the other in accordance with the decided selection order, the status of the selected one of said plurality of target

characters as the target currently attackable, thereby to sequentially change the attackable target in response to operation by the game player.”

That is, claim 21 is characterized in that it (e) decides a recommended order of selection to be attacked among those of said plurality of selectable candidate objects, (f) indicates such recommended order of selection to the respective candidate objects, and (g) allows the player to change thereby to sequentially change the attackable target in response to operation by the game player. Sanbongi, however, does not disclose a “recommended order of selection.” E1, E2, E3, etc. in Sanbongi’s FIG. 7 are simply the names of the enemies; they in no way relate to or suggest an order of selection.

Kawai fails to cure any of the above-noted deficiencies of Sanbongi. Kawai simply discloses “wire frame 55 which defines the effective range.” It is clear that Kawai neither discloses nor suggests any of the above noted features that are missing from Sanbongi.

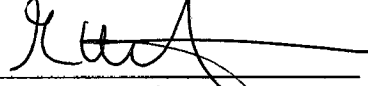
Therefore, claim 21 is patentable over the Sanbongi and Kawai combination. Claims 23, 25, 29 and 30 depend from claim 21 and are allowable along with claim 21. Claim 31-33 recite similar limitations as those discussed above and are allowable for at least the same reasons.

New claims 34-44 are also allowable for many of the reasons set forth above.

In view of the above, Applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

Thomas J. D'Amico

Registration No.: 28,371

Gianni Minutoli

Registration No.: 41,198

DICKSTEIN SHAPIRO LLP

1825 Eye Street, NW

Washington, DC 20006-5403

(202) 420-2200

Attorneys for Applicants